

2013 City of Austin Google Fiber Community Connections Program Application and Instructions

Google has announced plans to bring Google Fiber to Austin residents. The plan calls for building an ultra, high speed broadband network with Internet speeds of one gigabit per second, up to 100 times faster than normal to Austin's homes.

Google has agreed to provide up to 100 sites with broadband Internet services through its fiber network free of charge until April 8, 2023 in addition to City Hall and the new Central Library. These Community Connections will be to public or non-profit sites in the City of Austin that provide access and services directly to Austinites through what is being called the Community Connections program. Under the agreement with Google Fiber, the City of Austin will create the proposed list of sites for the program.

It is the City Council's goal to ensure an application and selection process that is transparent, available to all, and utilizes a clear set of [selection criteria](#) adopted by the City Council. Community Connections aims to provide fiber speed internet access directly to the public and will serve for innovation and digital inclusion, resulting in advancements unique to Austin's spirit.

Attached is the Community Connections Site Application, which is due by September 30, 2013.

Please direct questions to the City's Telecommunications & Regulatory Affairs Office at digital.inclusion@austintexas.gov or 512-974-2999.

For more information and application: austintexas.gov/digitalinclusion

Thank you for your consideration.



Community Connections Site Selection Application Form

The City of Austin will propose **100** public or non-profit organizations to receive Google Fiber connections at their locations.

Application Packet

In order to be considered for selection, please submit the following items:

- **General Application Form.** Complete this form ensuring that it is signed and dated.
- **Criteria Form. Complete this form as fully as possible.** If the organization offers services at more than one location, the applicant should complete the Criteria Form for each location and prioritize the single location that will benefit the most from having a gigabit of service.

Application Submission

All applications are due in the Office of Telecommunications & Regulatory Affairs (TARA) before **4:45 p.m. on Friday, September 30, 2013**. Late applications will not be considered.

Submissions may be submitted by email or snail mail to:

Email: digital.inclusion@austintexas.gov

Address: City of Austin - Municipal Building -124 W. 8th Street, Suite 210, Austin, Texas 78701

Phone: 512.974.2999

Application Review Process

Community Applications

- August 26, 2013 - Community Site Applications Available
- September 30, 2013 - Deadline for Site Applications for Community Connections
- October 1-31, 2013 - Staff Review & Assessment

Site List Adoption

- November 6, 2013 – Community Tech & Telecommunications Commission - Discussion & Input
- November 13, 2013 – Emerging Technology & Telecommunications Council Committee - Discussion & Recommendation to Council
- November 21, 2013 - Council Discussion & Adoption of Community Connection Site List
- End of 2013 - Google Fiber requested deadline for Community Connection Site List from City

Privacy Statement

This information is being collected and will be used to assist in determining your organization's eligibility and qualification for receiving a community connection on the City's proposed site list. This information provided may be published by the City. Any information collected, assembled, or maintained by or for a governmental body is subject to the Public Information Act.

Community Connections General Application Form

General Application Form

Applicant Organization Name: United Way for Greater Austin

Alias/DBA:

Program Name for Google Fiber Connection: United Way Navigation Center

Organization Mission and Purpose: The mission of United Way for Greater Austin is to inspire, lead and unite an eclectic community of philanthropists including individuals, nonprofits, business, and government to overcome barriers to economic opportunities and ensure Greater Austin continues to thrive. The purpose of the United Way Navigation Center (the primary focus of the following proposal) is to connect individuals to critical services including health care, employment, food, and emergency assistance.

Organization Website: www.unitedwayaustin.org

Contact Name: Rachel Weiner

City: Austin

State: TX

Zip: 78702

Phone: 512-225-0362

Email: rachel.weiner@uwatx.org

Location(s) applying for site selection (including physical address of location) and how long your organization plans on being at each location:

United Way for Greater Austin, 2000 E. MLK Jr. Blvd, Austin, TX 78702 – Permanent location

Type of Organization: ☒ Non-Profit ☐ Public Entity

Number of years in operation:
89 years

Number of employees at location:
70 (36 of which work in the United Way Navigation Center)

Community Connections Criteria Form

(Please complete this portion of application for each location in an electronic document and please explain each response, 1000 words maximum per response, please)

Criteria Form

Please include location if applying for more than one location:

Organization

1. What is your agency's vision? *(response required for all agencies)*

The vision of United Way for Greater Austin is for the greater Austin region to be a resilient, innovative, philanthropic, creative and thriving community for all.

2. What is your agency's mission and purpose? *(response required for all agencies)*

The mission of United Way for Greater Austin is to inspire, lead and unite an eclectic community of philanthropists including individuals, nonprofits, business, and government to overcome barriers to economic opportunities and ensure Greater Austin continues to thrive. The purpose of United Way for Greater Austin is to invest in research-based solutions and lead innovative programs that will build a culture of experts and advocates and collectively make Austin a place where everyone succeeds.

3. Please list your organization's affiliations, community partnerships, certifications, and/or accreditations. *(response required for all agencies)*

United Way for Greater Austin partners both deeply with over 40 local nonprofit agencies and broadly with 400 business partners that run charitable giving campaigns in their workplace. In addition to these entities, United Way for Greater Austin also works closely with the Austin Independent School District, Travis County Health and Human Services, Central Health, and City of Austin Public Libraries.

4. What is the total number of unduplicated clients served by your organization at this location last fiscal year? *(response required for non-profit agencies only)*

Last year, United Way for Greater Austin's collaborative strategic programs served over 15,000 people in the Central Texas region. At the United Way office, individuals regularly attend community planning meetings, trainings, and volunteer projects to serve Austin and the Central Texas region. In addition to these on-site opportunities, the Navigation Center, United Way's one-call access to health and wellness needs, answered more than 342,000 calls last year from individuals seeking services.

5. Briefly provide an overview of your organization and the services it offers. *(response required for all agencies)*

United Way for Greater Austin leads four strategic programs that provide service to low-income families in our region. For our community's youngest children, United Way leads the Success By 6 program to ensure kids enter kindergarten ready to succeed. Once these children are in school, the Target Graduation program focuses on providing support to middle school youth before, during, and after the school day to increase their ability to graduate. In order to ensure the entire family is successful, the Financial Opportunity program provides tools to families to build the money they have and become more financially stable. If unmet needs remain, the United Way Navigation Center program assists all populations by offering one-call access to healthcare and other human service needs like utility and rent assistance. These programs work together collectively to provide low-income children and families with the skills and resources they need to take an active role in their own success.

6. Describe the community issues your organization is attempting to address. Include a description of the

population most at risk of experiencing the issues described. *(response required for non-profit agencies only)*

United Way for Greater Austin primarily serves children and families that live in low-income areas of Austin and Travis County. The issues addressed by United Way include a range of barriers faced by families lacking financial stability. These barriers can include access to healthcare, quality education services, or support for their children outside of the school day. The Navigation Center, the program that is the focus of this proposal, primarily receives requests for service from individuals in crisis and often with low-literacy skills. Calls for support frequently come from the elderly, disabled, uninsured, and underinsured populations. However, the Navigation Center prides itself in being accessible to anyone interested in accessing, obtaining, or relaying impactful and meaningful information about social service and health care programs.

7. Describe the demographics (e.g. ethnicity, gender, age, and income levels) and geographic characteristics of the community members your organization serves. *(response required for non-profit agencies only)*

In order to quickly and sensitively refer individuals that call the Navigation Center to the service they need, the Navigation Specialists do not track ethnicity, age, or income level. However, because staff members strive to provide the access to the most appropriate service for their unique concerns, zip code and gender is collected. For 2012, the Navigation Center received calls that were primarily from women. Also, the individuals were largely located in low-income areas of Travis County. In particular, the 78753 zip code of Austin, often known as the St. John neighborhood. According to census data, 55% of these individuals live at or below 200% of the poverty level and nearly 60% identify as Hispanic or Latino. The Navigation Center staff members offer bilingual support to assist these community members in need of support. Ultimately, the Navigation Center offers service to all Central Texans by providing a free central access point for thousands of programs in the region.

8. Describe your organization's accessibility (e.g. accessible main entrance, within blocks of a public bus stop, etc.). *(response required for non-profit agencies only)*

United Way for Greater Austin is located at 2000 E. MLK Jr. Blvd. and is handicap accessible. The office is .6 miles from the MLK, Jr. MetroRail stop and .07 from a public bus stop. The main entrance is located at ground level and easily accessible from the street. United Way also provides an ample parking lot and street parking for visitors. The Navigation Center staff members are also available on-site from 7:30 am to 6:30 pm to take calls from anyone in the community seeking referrals to services.

9. If selected, how will your organization incorporate Google Fiber into the services it offers? *(response required for all agencies)*

The United Way Navigation Center will incorporate Google Fiber services in three ways: 1) through increased reports of community needs and trends; 2) advanced access to services through web chat and/or text message community engagement; and 3) improved, reliable connection to support for individuals calling in crisis. Google Fiber service will ensure that these three components work together to help the Navigation Center provide over 300,000 community members in the region with cutting edge information and service referrals.

The Navigation Center partners with 2-1-1 Texas through the Health and Human Services Commission to help individuals navigate more than 60,000 services. Navigation Center staff members also make appointments and do eligibility screenings for the Medical Access Program, Medicaid, and the Children's Health Insurance Program. Each call for service handled by these staff members provides valuable information about the needs and trends of Austin. In 2012, the Navigation Center acquired advanced web-based reporting software from Vision Link in order to better report this information for community planning purposes. Researchers and city officials looking at changes in need over time often use Navigation Center call data to guide geographic investment of resources. Unfortunately, due to the amount of bandwidth required to run these reports and a slow, unreliable internet connection, the staff is often unable to complete reports in-office. The bandwidth available through Google Fiber would allow staff to more regularly and efficiently share this information with community stakeholders.

Since 1996, the Navigation Center has been a call center for individuals seeking resources via telephone. In 2014, as communication increasingly moves to text message and internet, the Navigation Center plans to expand from a call center to a contact center, where in-need individuals have multiple entry points in which to receive service

referrals. Google Fiber service will allow the staff to respond to increased demand via web-based text message and chat features. Individuals will still be able to access the community resources they need, but in the platform of their choice. Staff members will at their computers and phones ready to interface with individuals regardless of whether they prefer to text, call, or chat online. Google Fiber will ensure that the bandwidth is available for staff to quickly respond to the needs of individuals, no matter their preferred vehicle for communication. Finally, Google Fiber's customer service and 24 hour support would be a benefit to United Way. The majority of the Navigation Center's tools are web-based and the staff members are dependent on reliable internet service. If individuals in crisis call when the internet is down or functioning slowly, the staff member is unable to assist them. If, for example, the individual is calling during a natural disaster or during a medical emergency and they are not able to access the appropriate service, the penalties of that missed opportunity could last a lifetime. The consistent support of Google Fiber would ensure that any internet issues are infrequent and addressed promptly.

10. The City of Austin requires an annual report explaining how selected organizations and the community they serve benefit from Google Fiber. If selected, how will your organization measure the impact Google Fiber has on those served by your organization? Describe evaluation methods, goals, and objectives.

(response required for all agencies)

The Navigation Center is the recipient of several contracts with the Health and Human Services Commission and Central Health. These contracts require regular reporting around call volume, type of calls, number of referrals, caller satisfaction, and response time in which calls are handled. United Way is prepared to track and report this information to the City of Austin as often as is requested. This information is already collected and published annually in the Community Needs and Trends Report every spring. The goal will be to maintain or increase the customer satisfaction percentage, which reached 98% in 2012. The Navigation Center also expects that the addition of Google Fiber will result in an increased call volume percentage and an increased percentage of individuals who use Navigation Center text and chat features to access information.

Community

(responses required for all agencies)

1. Briefly describe how Google Fiber will enhance public participation in your organization's service.

The Navigation Center provides individuals with one-call access to benefits for which they are eligible. These benefits range from rent and utility assistance to disaster aid to enrollment in healthcare programs like Medicaid. Community members that call the Navigation Center for referrals are often in crisis. They require immediate assistance to address emotional, financial, or medical needs and it is crucial that the staff is able to efficiently and sensitively connect them to services. Google Fiber will ensure that, regardless of increased call volume or database usage, members of the public that call the Navigation Center are able to promptly get connected to the service they need.

On average, the Navigation Center provides 1,400 referrals to services a day and approximately 27,000 a month. In times of peak need, public participation in the Navigation Center is even higher. During tax season, the Navigation Center provides an additional 3,000 calls a month from individuals seeking out free tax preparation services. With the Affordable Care Act, the Navigation Center is anticipating an additional 2,000 calls a month from people looking to identify their available and local health benefits. Individuals that call seeking referrals, no matter the circumstance, rely on the expertise of Navigation Center staff and their ability to quickly access the resources available to them in the web-based database of programs and services.

The Navigation Center is also designated as a "warm center" for Texas. This means that, in the case of a natural disaster, the Navigation Center must be prepared to increase to 200% of their typical operating capacity within four hours of the state's call to action. An example of this scenario took place during Hurricane Ike in 2008. The first 48 hours of the disaster generated 19,000 calls from individuals seeking shelter and emergency resources. The Navigation Center relies on fast internet service to quickly help the public in these situations. The greater the internet bandwidth, the better the staff will be able to assist callers in the unfortunate event of another disaster.

Google Fiber will also provide the Navigation Center with the bandwidth necessary to take advantage of new technology for community information and referrals. Through text and chat functions, the Navigation Center will be able to connect with people in the method of their choice. These services would be brand new for the Navigation Center and an innovative approach to connecting Austin residents to health and human service information and referrals. Given the popularity of these communication methods for other purposes, United Way is anticipating a large volume of public participation and an increased need for high bandwidth internet.

2. Briefly describe how your organization promotes digital inclusion.

The health and human service programs in the database accessed by Navigation Center staff are also accessible by community members on the United Way website. However, in order to appropriately use the database in a way that generates the most useful results, United Way provides training to social service providers, social workers, and city/county employees. United Way promotes this training throughout the region to ensure that there are no barriers to digital inclusion for accessing this powerful online database tool. In 2013, the Navigation Center has trained more than 1,400 individuals to use this tool. Each month the database page of the website receives an average of 1,000 unique views. United Way is proud to be the home for this invaluable community resource and conducts outreach to ensure that individuals have the skills necessary to usefully engage with this tool.

3. Will bringing Google Fiber to your organization help the underserved? Please explain.

The Navigation Center, by definition, provides assistance primarily to the underserved members of the Austin community that are seeking services to address their basic needs. In 2012, the Navigation Center provided over 25,000 referrals to individuals with questions about food stamps or SNAP benefits. More than 27,000 referrals were provided to individuals seeking assistance with their monthly electricity or rent payments. As the population in Austin rises, so do the needs of the underserved in our community, especially around housing and food. Last year there was a 55% increase in the calls for food pantries and the Navigation Center staff are anticipating an additional increase in total calls for this need in 2013. The Navigation Center helps the underserved by providing a simple, one-call access point to nonprofit providers and government resources. Google Fiber will ensure that they are able to continue this service with greater efficiency and increased access points for the community.

4. How much of your community will benefit from the Google Fiber connection?

The Navigation Center offers one-call access to anyone in the ten-county region of Central Texas seeking critical services including health care, employment, food, emergency assistance, and other human services. In 2012, more than 342,000 calls were received from individuals seeking support navigating the complex web of social services in the community. Google Fiber will allow any member of our community that contacts the Navigation Center to experience exceptional service at increased speed.

5. Briefly describe how your organization will offer a new community service as a result of the Google Fiber connection.

The Navigation Center proposes to use high bandwidth of Google Fiber to begin offering information and referrals through text message and web chat. This new community service will create an additional access point for individuals seeking healthcare services, appointments, or access to benefits. Individuals will be able to receive text alerts on their phone reminding them of services they scheduled. They will also have the option to use a chat feature and connect to online guidance from a Navigation Center staff member in the language of their choice. The Navigation Center anticipates this will lead to an increase in referrals and require the increased bandwidth offered by Google Fiber.

Innovation

(responses required for all agencies)

1. Please describe the potential innovative applications that could be developed with a gigabit connection.

A recent poll of mothers receiving WIC benefits by the Center for Disease Control indicated that 98% send text messages on a daily basis and would prefer to receive health information through their phone. According to Pew research conducted in 2011, texting is most prevalent among individuals ages 18-29, a particularly large demographic group in Austin. Census data for Austin indicates that nearly 48% of the city is less than 30 years old. In response to this data the Navigation Center has been investigating an approach to share information via text message. This information would be reactive, in response to individuals contacting the Navigation Center, and proactive. For example, if a caller made an appointment for a service through the use of the Navigation Center, staff would be able to send a text message reminder of the appointment to the individual's mobile device. This is likely to increase the Navigation Center's use of bandwidth and require the gigabit connection offered by Google Fiber.

2. Does your organization have or foresee high bandwidth applications?

In 2012, in order to ensure that all United Way files were stored securely and accessible from outside of the office, the organization switched to a virtual office environment. All data is now cloud-based and accessible through the internet. United Way uses seven different databases to access and store community information and all database platforms are web-based. At any given time, approximately 70 individuals employed by United Way will be using the internet to perform all job functions. This creates a tremendous demand for bandwidth during all hours of business. The Navigation Center staff shares their internet connection with all programs of United Way and struggles with web delays when a large number of employees are consuming the bulk of the bandwidth.

3. Briefly describe how your organization is interested in advancing your technology.

The Navigation Center often receives calls from individuals that do not have access to online resources. Therefore, the addition of web chat technology might be prohibitive to many community members in need. That's why United Way is proposing to partner with City of Austin public libraries to promote the Navigation Center's chat function at local neighborhood libraries where individuals already gather. This will advance the technology in a space where community members may not typically think to ask for health and human service assistance. It will also increase the awareness of resources available to many economically disadvantaged individuals who access the libraries in their neighborhoods.

4. Does your organization have the capacity and resources to advance your technologies? Please explain.

Information technology at United Way is overseen by a subcommittee of the organization's Finance Committee, a standing committee established by the Board of Directors. It is led by Marie Baker, United Way board member, and comprised of volunteers and staff. Currently, the IT Committee meets monthly and membership consists of individuals with professions in technology services. This committee offers regular counsel on the use of technology in the organization and frequently helps the Information Technology department at United Way troubleshoot any issues related to capacity and resources. Also, United Way has three full-time staff members dedicated to Information Technology support services for all programs housed in United Way.

Practical Pragmatic

(responses required for all agencies)

1. Will the connection help your organization financially? How?

The Google Fiber connection will help United Way financially in that it will offset the budget currently being invested in internet service. Every year, United Way spends approximately \$4,880 on internet service. Google Fiber would relieve that cost and allow United Way to invest it instead into the Austin community.

2. Will this be the organization's primary or secondary connection?

Primary

3. Does your organization have (or will it have) equipment necessary to connect?

Yes

4. Does your organization currently have access to a high bandwidth connection?

United Way currently uses a Time Warner Business Class cable internet connection. The bandwidth is 50 Mbit/s upload and 5 Mbit/s downloads. This connection is shared by all programs of United Way and is spread between approximately 70 individuals on any given day.

Applicant's Statement

I certify that answers given herein are true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that false or misleading information given in my application will result in disqualification. I understand and agree that I am required to abide by City of Austin ordinances, policies and rules.

I understand if selected to receive a Google Fiber connection that the organization I represent may be required to:

☒ submit an annual report to the TARA Office explaining how the organization has benefited from the free service.



Signature

9/30/13

Date

Director of Grants

Title

Please submit this form to TARA by 4:45 p.m. on Friday, September 30, 2013.

Email: digital.inclusion@austintexas.gov

Address: City of Austin – TARA - Municipal Building
124 W. 8th Street, Suite 210
Austin, Texas 78701